

# COUNTY BUILDINGS RE-OPENING PLAN

LAPORTE COUNTY GOVERNMENT'S  
COVID-19 RESPONSE



LAPORTE COUNTY GOVERNMENT

May 20, 2020

## Table of Contents

BACKGROUND .....	3
Mandatory for All Employees .....	4
For All Employees While at Work:.....	4
INFECTION AND PREVENTION MEASURES, FOR ALL EMPLOYEES .....	5
HAND HYGIENE.....	5
RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE (CLOTH MASKS).....	5
WORKPLACE HOUSEKEEPING PRACTICES.....	6
INFECTION AND PREVENTION MEASURES, PHYSICAL CONTROLS .....	6
INFECTION AND PREVENTION MEASURES, ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROLS.....	7
WORKING FROM HOME TIPS.....	8
TIMETABLE for REOPENING OF COUNTY BUILDINGS .....	9
<b>PHASE 1 - From May 15, 2020 to June 1, 2020</b> .....	9
<b>PHASE 2 - From June 1, 2020 to June 15, 2020 Return of Employees with Modified Schedules</b> .....	9
<b>PHASE 3 - From Monday June 15, 2020 forward</b> .....	9
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES .....	11

## BACKGROUND

On April 16, 2020, the White House issued "Opening up America Again," a federal guideline for reopening the United States economy after an extended closure due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. Similarly, the Governor of Indiana issued a "Back on Track Indiana Plan" outlining the state's approach to opening back up. This plan, therefore, is the "County Building Reopening Plans", which outlines our approach to opening County-owned facilities following the guidelines from both the federal and state plans. Basic functions and work have been performed – much of it remotely – during this crisis, the following is not a “Back to work” plan since work has been occurring and public services fully delivered throughout. Therefore, this is a phased guide to re-opening public buildings safely and with health considerations uppermost in mind.

This memorandum outlines actions that the County has taken in preparation for employees to return to in-person workplace operations where appropriate and a re-opening of the county's buildings. These directives are subject to immediate changes at the sole discretion of the La Porte County Commissioners as conditions change, including new guidance from federal, state or other local officials.

Guidance developed in this document has been in consultation with the County Attorney, with the HR Department and with the county's "Re-Opening Working Group" and is based on guidance from the OSHA publication, "Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19"

<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>

In addition to this document, several departments have additional measures beyond these guidelines in place due to the high exposure risk associated with specific department operations; especially in the public health and safety arenas. These department directives will all be in addition to the measures described herein.

## Mandatory for All Employees Daily Prior to Coming to One of the County Buildings:

1. All employees are required to monitor your own health conditions. It is mandatory for employee to perform a self-check of any illness. This includes but is not limited to symptoms such as fever, cough, shortness of breath, etc. **If you experience any signs of illness, stay home and immediately call your supervisor.**
2. If you have symptoms associated with COVID-19, you should call your doctor immediately and contact Human Resources.
3. If you have been in close contact with others while off from work (at home or in the community) and they have symptoms of COVID-19, immediately call your supervisor as you may be subject to self-quarantine.
4. **High Risk** employees will be encouraged to remain at home and work remotely, if possible. High Risk employees are employees 65 years of age or older and/or those with pre-existing health conditions.
5. All employees will be required to perform daily body temperature checks before coming to work. Once employees arrive to work, you will be required to acknowledge you took your temperature and it was less than 100.4°Fahrenheit. If you have a temperature more than 100.4°Fahrenheit, stay home and contact your supervisor.

## For All Employees While at Work:

1. If you are at work and start to experience any symptoms of illness of any kind, you are required to immediately leave work and go home (provided you are not leaving unsafe conditions due to the nature of your work): you are also required to contact your supervisor as soon as possible. (If you feel as though you need immediate medical attention and/or cannot drive yourself, EMS can be called).
2. If you feel you have potentially been exposed to COVID-19 due to the nature of your work, contact your supervisor immediately. Any potential or known exposure will be reviewed for your safety and the safety of your co-workers. Human Resources will determine if you are subject to CDC quarantine guidelines that may include:
  - a. **Without symptoms:** depending on the exposure review, at the very least will be documented. It could also include a self-quarantine for at least seven (7) days with the final three (3) days with zero symptoms and/or in accordance with CDC guidelines.
  - b. **If you have symptoms** of COVID-19, you will be required to self-quarantine for at least fourteen (14) days and the last three (3) days with zero symptoms, unless you have a negative test result, then you might return after seven (7) days; with the final three (3) days with zero symptoms and/or in accordance with CDC guidelines.

- c. Any potential workplace exposure will be documented with Worker's Compensation Insurance, and internal contact tracing will be reviewed in accordance with CDC guidelines.

## INFECTION AND PREVENTION MEASURES, FOR ALL EMPLOYEES

OSHA has created an occupational risk pyramid for COVID-19. The level of risk depends on the work duties associated with each job. For example, "Very High Risk" exposure job duties would be associated with EMS personnel, Health Department personnel, LaPorte County Sheriff's deputies and jail staff, Community Corrections, and Juvenile Services Center. Most other roles in LaPorte County Government are either "Lower Risk" or a "Medium" risk due to regular interactions with other co-workers and/or the public.

The guidance risk pyramid assists employers as we assess workplace policies, practices and procedures. Generally, since many LaPorte County employees have contact with the general public on a regular basis, we have based our work place alternations on "Medium" exposure risk in order to exceed minimum guidance standards.

Public Safety and Public Health departments have high risk potential conditions and may have additional precautions in place. Controls have been implemented based on this risk assessment for infection and prevention measures. All employees are expected to implement the following:

### HAND HYGIENE

- Frequent and thorough hand washing of at least 20 seconds is required by all employees.
- All County facilities are equipped with hand soap and or hand sanitizer for employees.
- All employees are required to wash their hands immediately upon arriving at any County facility.
- The touching of surfaces, outside of individual work spaces will be limited and discouraged as much as possible. Please immediately use hand sanitizer or wash your hands after touching door handles, lights switches, time clocks, copy machines and any other high contact surfaces.
- Employees must limit the sharing of desks, phones, tools and/or work spaces wherever possible.

### RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE (CLOTH MASKS)

- All County employees are required to wear a mask when you are in a County building, hallway, washroom or common area – No exceptions. If you are alone in an office, you do not have to wear a mask. When you leave your office and are in the hallway, your mask must be on. If you are outdoors, you do not have to wear a mask but social distancing still applies. If you are at an outdoor function, work activity or event for the County with multiple participants, you must still wear your mask. (Wash hands after removing your mask and put your mask in your daily laundry after use).

- Cloth masks will be provided to employees as a result of efforts by our PPE committee to obtain masks; however, employees may wear their own face masks.
- All employees are required to practice social distancing of at least six feet between yourself and any other person for all workplace interactions.

## WORKPLACE HOUSEKEEPING PRACTICES

- Surfaces that have high contact potential should be immediately disinfected after each use. (i.e. time clocks, copy machines, etc.)
- Employees will be required to routinely disinfect workplace surfaces you have come in contact with including cleaning desks, chairs, computer keyboards and other work tools daily before leaving at the end of the day. (This is in addition to the regular schedule of daily cleaning).
- Staff will wear gloves and masks when opening external mail, receipting any monies, credit cards or money orders and will wash hands after handling.

## INFECTION AND PREVENTION MEASURES, PHYSICAL CONTROLS

Several infection and prevention control measures have been implemented that have changed some of the physical conditions for the workplace.

1. Employee workspaces – at the time of re-opening, where possible, alterations will have been made to separate workstations by a minimum of six feet. Required workplace signage will have been posted for additional guidance. In some cases, where workspaces cannot be separated, masks will be required for those employees in addition to the requirement in common areas.
2. Fortunately, in several locations, security measures are already in place that includes glass or plastic barriers to limit contact. In workspaces where it has been deemed necessary, physical barriers are being installed prior to the public opening date including clear plastic/glass temporary walls and /or sneeze guards for added protection.
3. Public walking traffic patterns are being developed in the various buildings to separate traffic flow in hallways as much as possible. Furthermore, floor designations with masking tape are being applied at six-foot increments where possible to separate any potential line queuing as appropriate at customer service counters. Signage is being applied before public re-opening in all county buildings to encourage social distancing and to maintain six foot social distancing.
4. Room capacity limitations will be implemented. Offices, breakrooms, restrooms or other rooms should have limited numbers in the room at the same time depending on the square footage of the space. This also includes limiting elevator use to two people at a time. (Overall capacity considerations have also been reviewed to limit the total number of people in any space at one time based on the square footage of the space). Employees are encouraged to take meal breaks at their work station.

5. Where possible, motion detected light switches may be installed and interior doors (non-security doors) are propped open to limit touching of similar surfaces as much as possible.
6. Where possible, we will limit contacts during customer transactions (i.e. encourage use of credit cards with terminals that limit contact, accept deliveries in one place at one drop off location that limits touching etc.).

## INFECTION AND PREVENTION MEASURES, ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROLS

1. Even after the re-opening date, some employees may still be encouraged by their department head to work remotely when such conditions provide for job duties to be completed effectively.
2. In accordance with the Family's First Coronavirus Response Act, employee sick leave policies have been reviewed to allow for maximum flexibility for COVID-19 related requested leave.
3. For job duties that require on-site presence, employee schedules may be staggered or altered for weekday or weekend schedules where appropriate, to minimize the number of people on site at one time and to limit overall contact.
4. Even after re-opening, in-person meetings should only be held when absolutely necessary. Virtual meets are still preferred. No more than five (5) people are allowed to be present for an in-person meeting (all must be wearing masks) and meetings can only take place in designated locations to limit visitors in workspaces. The limitation on five (5) in attendance does not apply to scheduled public meetings in the County complex meeting room which has been set up to accommodate up to twenty-five (25) persons in attendance with chairs fully spaced to accomplish social distancing.
5. County employees are not permitted to travel to work-related events outside of LaPorte County unless specifically approved by County Commissioners.

## WORKING FROM HOME TIPS

- **Stick to a Schedule** – Create a morning routine. Consider beginning and ending work at the same time each day, the way you would if you were at the office. You can even log your day and daily tasks. Employees should track their hours worked, log-in and log-out process.
- **Give Yourself Space** – A dedicated workspace (ideally one you can close the door) is a solid way to keep work and life separate. Be sure to schedule breaks. Try to limit distractions.
- **Look the Part** – Get dressed for the day as you would if coming into the office.
- **Build Boundaries** – Limit your work to business hours only.
- **Become Proficient with Email** – Keep all emails documented, and make sure that you take the time to read and answer all of your business emails.
- **Socialize with Colleagues** – Send managers or supervisors your end of week report. Set up a video call with colleagues or manager once a week to check in.
- **Take Sick Days** – When you're not well, take the sick time you need. Keep in mind that sometimes it's best to rest and get better so that you can be your most productive self in the long term.
- **Get Fresh Air** – Open windows to let in as much natural daylight and fresh air as possible, and take walks if possible.
- **Look for Training Opportunities** – Check out online webinars being provided to further your knowledge in your department. Even list future goals for your department, ideas you may have and present to manager.
- **Don't Hesitate to Ask for What You Need** – Be sure to ask for what you need within reason.



## TIMETABLE for REOPENING OF COUNTY BUILDINGS

### **PHASE 1 - From May 15, 2020 to June 1, 2020**

Continue operations as during previous Operations Orders with department heads determining which employees should be working remotely and which are in the county buildings to keep individual departments operational.

### **PHASE 2 - From June 1, 2020 to June 15, 2020 Return of Employees with Modified Schedules**

Continue process of gradually rotating employees back into county buildings even as the doors remain closed to the general public. In the Courthouses, security continues to monitor flow into the buildings and question whether members of the public are presenting at the door for “essential” business including any court hearings.

### **PHASE 3 - From Monday June 15, 2020 forward**

Most county buildings will re-open to the public with checkpoints/tents installed outside of the Courthouse/Complex (on walkway between the buildings), outside the Hiler Building, the Michigan City Courthouse, and 8<sup>th</sup> Street Offices in Michigan City with screening questions and temperatures taken of any and all members of the public by Health Department staff. Such checkpoints will also have a Sheriff’s deputy stationed there to assist with processing members of the public into the buildings. Masks will be available at the checkpoints for any members of the public who do not have one.

1. Members of the public will be limited and monitored by Security and will be allowed in the building by appointment only. Only those persons with scheduled hearings or appointments will be permitted in the building.
2. Each department will prepare a list daily of scheduled appointments, hearings, etc. and provide the list to Courthouse Security.
3. Every person arriving at a County Building will be screened through the following procedure:
  - a. Every person entering the building must be presumed positive for COVID-19
  - b. Verify the individual is on the daily list
  - c. Each individual will be screened using the County’s COVID-19 Questionnaire
  - d. Individuals will have their temperature taken
    - i. If temperature is less than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, the person will be allowed in the building

- ii. If temperature is over 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, the person will be told to leave the building and contact the department or court by phone
  - iii. Members of the public MUST have face masks on to be admitted into the building
- e. Individuals will proceed to security screening
- 4. No family members, assistants, etc. will be allowed into the building unless they are on the approved list
- 5. Individuals who have unscheduled business in a County building may request the screener to contact the department to approve the individual on a case by case basis
- 6. Employees, contractors, vendors, suppliers and visitors must wear a face mask upon entry to any County Building.
- 7. Face masks are required outdoors if safe social distancing and gathering practices are not possible.
- 8. Once patrons have completed their business in the building, they will be expected to leave immediately. If they are loitering or not practicing social distance guidelines, they will be asked to leave the building immediately.

While most employees will have rotated back into the public offices, some will continue to work rotating and staggered shifts and some employees will continue to work remotely as determined necessary and prudent by their supervisor. High Risk employees will remain on COVID-19 leave. As during all prior periods, county department heads and elected officials continue to have discretion on how best to assign employees in order to see that work continues and there are no service disruptions to the general public.

**Separate policies and procedures are being developed by the Courts in accordance with Supreme Court Orders to address how Court hearings and business is to be handled.**

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### LA PORTE COUNTY COVID-19 RESOURCES

<https://laporteco.in.gov/covid-19/>

### CDC

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>

### INDIANA RESOURCES

<https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/>

**PLEASE DIRECT ALL QUESTIONS TO YOUR DEPARTMENT HEAD  
FIRST AND HUMAN RESOURCES FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.**

This County Buildings Re-Opening plan is subject to change.

# EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

## PAID SICK LEAVE AND EXPANDED FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE UNDER THE FAMILIES FIRST CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE ACT

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA or Act) requires certain employers to provide their employees with paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19. These provisions will apply from April 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020.

### ► PAID LEAVE ENTITLEMENTS

Generally, employers covered under the Act must provide employees:

Up to two weeks (80 hours, or a part-time employee's two-week equivalent) of paid sick leave based on the higher of their regular rate of pay, or the applicable state or Federal minimum wage, paid at:

- 100% for qualifying reasons #1-3 below, up to \$511 daily and \$5,110 total;
- $\frac{2}{3}$  for qualifying reasons #4 and 6 below, up to \$200 daily and \$2,000 total; and
- Up to 12 weeks of paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave paid at  $\frac{2}{3}$  for qualifying reason #5 below for up to \$200 daily and \$12,000 total.

A part-time employee is eligible for leave for the number of hours that the employee is normally scheduled to work over that period.

### ► ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES

In general, employees of private sector employers with fewer than 500 employees, and certain public sector employers, are eligible for up to two weeks of fully or partially paid sick leave for COVID-19 related reasons (see below). *Employees who have been employed for at least 30 days prior to their leave request may be eligible for up to an additional 10 weeks of partially paid expanded family and medical leave for reason #5 below.*

### ► QUALIFYING REASONS FOR LEAVE RELATED TO COVID-19

An employee is entitled to take leave related to COVID-19 if the employee is unable to work, including unable to telework, because the employee:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. is subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19;</li><li>2. has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine related to COVID-19;</li><li>3. is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and is seeking a medical diagnosis;</li><li>4. is caring for an individual subject to an order described in (1) or self-quarantine as described in (2);</li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>5. is caring for his or her child whose school or place of care is closed (or child care provider is unavailable) due to COVID-19 related reasons; or</li><li>6. is experiencing any other substantially-similar condition specified by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.</li></ol> |
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### ► ENFORCEMENT

The U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division (WHD) has the authority to investigate and enforce compliance with the FFCRA. Employers may not discharge, discipline, or otherwise discriminate against any employee who lawfully takes paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave under the FFCRA, files a complaint, or institutes a proceeding under or related to this Act. Employers in violation of the provisions of the FFCRA will be subject to penalties and enforcement by WHD.



WAGE AND HOUR DIVISION  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

For additional information  
or to file a complaint:

**1-866-487-9243**

TTY: 1-877-889-5627

**[dol.gov/agencies/whd](https://dol.gov/agencies/whd)**



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